

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 RABAT 04086 01 OF 02 271522Z

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 SSC-01 NIC-01 OMB-01 SAM-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 EB-11

DRC-01 /167 W

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R 271355Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2988

INFO USINT ALGIERS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 4086

E.O. 11652: XGDS 4, DECLAS 12-31-90

TAGS: PINT MO

SUBJ: KING MAKES MAJOR FOREIGN MINISTRY APPOINTMENTS

1. SUMMARY: GOM HAS ANNOUNCED FOUR MAJOR FOREIGN MINISTRY APPOINTMENTS: 1. FORMER ROYAL CABINET DIRECTOR GENERAL SLAOUI AS PERM REP AT UN; 2. INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DIVISIONS CHIEF CHERKAOUI AS SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS; 3. FON MIN SECRETARY GENERAL SKALLI AS GOM REP TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA; AND 4. FON MIN CABINET DIRECTOR IRAQUI TO REPLACE SKALLI AS SEC GEN. RETURN OF SLAOUI TO GOVERNMENT AFTER THREE-YEAR HIATUS, AND ELEVATION OF UNFP SYMPATHIZER CHERKAOUI TO MINISTERIAL LEVEL POSITION ARE POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT AND HAVE LED TO SPECULATION THAT MAJOR OPENING TO OPPOSITION MAY BE IN THE WORKS. SUCH SPECULATION MAY BE PREMATURE IN THAT OTHER ISSUES NEED BE RESOLVED BEFORE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN PARTIES AND PALACE CAN TAKE PLACE.

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PAGE 02 RABAT 04086 01 OF 02 271522Z

STILL, APPOINTMENTS MAY REPRESENT MORE FLEXIBLE ROYAL ATTITUDE AND COULD PRESAGE OPENING OF SERIOUS DIALOGUE

BETWEEN OPPOSITION AND PALACE. WE HAVE UNCONFIRMED REPORT OF RELEASES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON AUGUST 24, FOUR FOREIGN MINISTRY APPOINTMENTS WERE ANNOUNCED. THEY ARE: FORMER ROYAL CABINET DIRECTOR DRISS SLAOUI, APPOINTED MOROCCO'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN; MOULAY AHMED CHERKAOUI, CHIEF OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DIVISION IN FOREIGN MINISTRY, APPOINTED SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS; CURRENT FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL ALI SKALLI, APPOINTED MOROCCO'S REPRESENTATIVE TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA; AND ABDELHAKIM IRAQUI, CURRENTLY DIRECTOR OF THE CABINET IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, NAMED SECRETARY GENERAL IN PLACE OF SKALLI.

3. APPOINTMENTS OF SLAOUI AND CHERKAOUI ARE OF INTERNAL POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. BETWEEN 1959 AND 1971 WHEN SLAOUI LEFT GOVERNMENT, APPARENTLY AT HIS OWN REQUEST FOLLOWING SKHIRAT COUP ATTEMPT, HE HELD CABINET-LEVEL POSITIONS AND AS CABINET DIRECTOR GENERAL FROM 1969-71 WAS CONSIDERED MORE POWERFUL THAN PRIME MINISTER. (AS DIRECTOR GENERAL, HE RANKED SECOND IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE, BEHIND KING'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND AHEAD OF PRIME MINISTER. CURRENT INCUMBENT OF POSITION IS ONLY DIRECTOR, NOT DIRECTOR GENERAL, AND THEREFORE DOES NOT RANK SO HIGH.) DURING HIS LONG SERVICE, SLAOUI, THOUGH OFTEN GIVEN LOW MARKS AS POLICY MAKER, WAS LOYAL AND STRONG ON ADMINISTRATIVE DETAIL AND WAS CONSIDERED AS CLOSE TO KING AS ANY OTHER MAN IN KINGDOM. PRIOR TO HIS WITHDRAWAL FROM GOVERNMENT, HE PROFESSED HIMSELF DISILLUSIONED AT LEVEL OF CORRUPTION PREVAILING IN COUNTRY. SINCE 1971 HE HAS BEEN TEACHING LAW IN CASABLANCA AND HIS PRONOUNCEMENTS ON STATE OF NATION TO EMBASSY OFFICERS WHO CALLED ON HIM PERIODICALLY HAVE BEEN UNFAILINGLY GRIM.

4. ALSO OF INTEREST IS CHERKAOUI'S ELEVATION TO NUMBER TWO SPOT IN MINISTRY, A POSITION THAT CARRIES MINISTERIAL RANK. (FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS NOT HAD SECRETARY OF STATE POSITION IN RECENT PAST.) CHERKAOUI HAS SERVED FOR MANY YEARS AS CHIEF OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DIVISION, A POSITION  
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PAGE 03 RABAT 04086 01 OF 02 271522Z

FROM WHICH HE ATTENDED A NUMBER OF UNGAS. HE IS A COMPETENT AND DILIGENT BUREAUCRAT WHO MOST SOURCES DID NOT EXPECT WAS DESTINED FOR UPPER REACHES OF MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT HE MAY WORK FROM OFFICE ADJOINING MINISTER'S AND DEVOTE GOOD MEASURE OF HIS TIME TO STAFF WORK. ORDINARILY, IN MOROCCAN (I.E., FRENCH) SYSTEM, CABINET DIRECTOR IS CHIEF STAFF MAN WHILE SECRETARY OF STATE AND SECRETARY GENERAL DEVOTE THEMSELVES MORE TO MATTERS OF POLICY.

5. MORE IMPORTANT FROM POLITICAL STANDPOINT IS THAT CHERKAOUI HAS LONG ASSOCIATION WITH UNFP. HE HAS SERVED ON PARTY'S NATIONAL COUNCIL AND IS CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH UNFP/RABAT LEADER ABDERRAHIM BOUABID. CHERKAOUI PARTICIPATED IN UNFP-LED STRIKE OF FOREIGN MINISTRY EMPLOYEES IN DECEMBER 1961 AND WAS DISMISSED FROM MINISTRY FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS FOLLOWING THIS INCIDENT. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT ADVERTISE HIS UNFP CONNECTION, HE MADE IT PLAIN TO EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT HE WAS A SYMPATHIZER, AND HIS COMMENTS ON INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE HERE WERE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF REGIME. A UNFP-ORIENTED FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT CHERKAOUI HAD CHECKED WITH BOUABID BEFORE ACCEPTING NEW POSITION. OFFICIAL GAVE IT AS HIS OPINION THAT APPOINTMENT WAS FIRST STEP IN WHAT WOULD BE MAJOR OPENING TO UNFP.

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PAGE 01 RABAT 04086 02 OF 02 271441Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RABAT 4086

6. EMBASSY WILL MISS SKALLI AS SECRETARY GENERAL. HE IS A CULTIVATED AND GENIAL PERSON WHO WAS ACCESSIBLE AND FORTH-

COMING WHENEVER WE HAD IMPORTANT MATTERS TO RAISE WITH HIS MINISTRY. HE HAS HAD PREVIOUS AMBASSADORIAL SERVICE (BONN 1970-71) AND SHOULD BE REAL ADDITION IN GENEVA. WE HAVE ALSO FOUND IRAQUI (SOMETIMES SPELLED LARAKI), WHO MOVES UP TO REPLACE SKALLI, EASY TO DEAL WITH. HE IS RELATIVE AND CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI AND HAS SERVED PREVIOUSLY AS SECOND MAN IN MOROCCAN EMBASSY IN MADRID AND IN BELGIUM.

7. SHIFT GIVES GOM STRONG TEAM FOR DEALING WITH SAHARAN QUESTION AT UN. BECAUSE OF HIS PRESTIGE AT HOME, SLAOUI MAY BE EXPECTED TO HAVE RELATIVE FREEDOM OF MANEUVER AND WILL PRESUMABLY MAKE GOOD USE OF CHERKAOUT'S DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF WORKINGS OF UN. CURRENT MOROCCAN PERM REP TO UN, MEHDI MRANI ZENTAR, CLEARLY ODD MAN OUT. ZENTAR, WHO HAS BEEN AT UN SINCE 1971, USED TO BE A POWER IN  
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PAGE 02 RABAT 04086 02 OF 02 271441Z

FOREIGN MINISTRY BUT GETS ON NEITHER WITH EX-FOREIGN MINISTER BENHIMA NOR, WE UNDERSTAND, WITH LARAKI. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL MENTIONED ABOVE SAID HE THOUGHT ZENTAR, WHO HAS TOLD AMERICAN FRIENDS IN U.S. THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO RESIGN AND GO INTO BUSINESS, MIGHT BE GIVEN ANOTHER POST.

8. COMMENT: INTERESTING ASPECT OF SLAOUI APPOINTMENT IS THAT IT MEANS A SECOND MAJOR PRE-SKHIRAT FIGURE (LARAKI OF COURSE IS FIRST) HAS BEEN REHABILITATED. THIS HAS FURTHERED SPECULATION THAT LARAKI BEING PERMITTED TO BRING "OLD CROWD" BACK TO PROMINENCE. SLAOUI, HOWEVER, WILL BE ABROAD AND, GIVEN HIS PERSONAL STATURE, WE DOUBT HE OWES HIS JOB TO LARAKI. IN FACT IN PAST LARAKI HAS BEEN CONSIDERED SLAOUI'S PROTEGE AND NOT OTHER WAY AROUND.

9. WE ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT APPOINTMENTS MEAN THAT RUMORED "GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION" IS JUST AROUND CORNER. ROLE OF OPPOSITION IN SUCH A GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE NEGOTIATED BEFORE MAJOR RECONCILIATION BETWEEN PARTIES AND PALACE COULD TAKE PLACE. NEVERTHELESS, ELEVATION OF MAN CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH UNFP TO CABINET-LEVEL POSITION IS SIGNIFICANT MOVE WHICH MAY SIGNAL MORE FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE ON PART OF KING AND POSSIBLE ROYAL WILLINGNESS TO ENTER SERIOUS DIALOGUE WITH OPPOSITION. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE HAVE UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE RELEASED EARLY AUGUST 27. SUCH RELEASE HAS BEEN CONSISTENT OPPOSITION DEMAND.

10. EMBASSY WILL UPDATE BIOGRAPHIC HANDBOOK REPORT ON SLAOUI (LATEST AVAILABLE HERE IS DATED NOVEMBER 1970) AND PREPARE NEW REPORTS ON CHERKAOU, SKALLI, AND IRAQUI.  
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